Active Inclusion funded by Europe?

The impact of the European Social Fund on local social and employment policies

FIRST DRAFT

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Abstract:

During the last decades, scholars in Europeanisation research have intensively studied ‚softer' forms of Europeanisation in less regulated fields such as social and employment policies (Lopez-Santana 2009, Heidenreich/Zeitlin 2009). However, recent studies dealing with these forms of governance show that the EU impact on member states' national social and employment policies is surprisingly low (Graziano 2012). Nevertheless, since an increasing EU focus on subnational levels can truly be stated, the question arises whether the multi-level aspect and the relationship between the EU-and the subnational level have been underestimated within Europeanisation research. Here, the EU concept on active inclusion plays a key role, since it integrates three different aspects: unemployment benefits, labour market- and social services. These dimensions have traditionally been organized at different politico-administrative level in the majority of the EU member states, and are therefore highly sensitive to multi-level governance approaches. Furthermore, EU active inclusion policies have been – as social and employment policies in general – closely embedded into a broader governance framework. We will show in our paper that in this context, a formerly simple and mostly irrelevant distributional tool has turned to become a conditional and highly relevant financing instrument of EU social and employment policies: the European Social Fund (ESF). Due to its well-established position in domestic delivery-landscapes, its role for the implementation of EU active inclusion policies should not be underestimated. However, there is still a lack of research on the role of EU funding tools and how they shape domestic structures. In order to shed light on this question, we will conduct a fuzzy-set analysis of impact, usage, problems and incentives of EU active inclusion policies, transported via the European Social Fund. We do not only aim to identify the empirically existing types of EU-appearance via the ESF against the backdrop of theoretically derived ideal types, but also to detect a number of characteristics behind these types. Our analysis is based on the empirical findings in 18 local cases in six different welfare states: France, Poland, UK, Sweden, Germany and Italy.

Introduction[1]

Active inclusion has become a prominent 'buzzword' during the last years. It came up as an explicit EU concept in the year 2008, when the Commission launched 'recommendations on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market' (European Commission, 2008). The principles communicated by then are still the basis of the current Active Inclusion Strategy, embedded in the Social Investment Package of the European Union (European Commission, 2013). For active inclusion, emphasis is put on three strands which should be effectively integrated to achieve *the integration into sustainable, quality employment of those who can work and provide resources which are sufficient to live in dignity, together with support for social participation, for those who cannot* (European Commission, 2008): (1) adequate income support, (2) inclusive labour markets and (3) access to quality services.

However, the European Union does not have legislative power in policy fields tackling active inclusion. Coordination among member states' in the broader field of social- and employment policies is driven by 'soft' governance forms such as recommendations, reporting or benchmarking, and there is no formal commitment for the member states towards what has been formulated at the European level. During the last decades, these forms of European governance have been extended and embedded in broader contexts such as the Lisbon Strategy, Europe2020 and the European Semester. During the last decades, scholars in Europeanisation research have intensively studied these softer forms of EU governance, as well as Europeanisation and EU-induced change in less regulated fields such as social and employment policies (Lopez-Santana 2009, Heidenreich/Zeitlin 2009). New tools of analysis have been developed in order to adequately analyse new modes of European governance. However, recent studies dealing with these forms of governance show that the EU impact on member states' national social and employment policies is surprisingly low (Graziano 2012). In the case of the Active Inclusion Strategy, the implementation has been judged as weak, too (Frazer/Marlier, 2013).

Nevertheless, since an increasing EU focus on subnational levels can truly be stated, the question arises whether the multi-level aspect and the relationship between the EU-and the subnational level have been underestimated within Europeanisation research. Here, the EU concept on active inclusion plays a key role, since it integrates three different aspects: unemployment benefits, labour market- and social services. These dimensions have traditionally been organized at different politico-administrative level in the majority of the EU member states, and are therefore highly sensitive to multi-level governance approaches. Furthermore, EU active inclusion policies have been – as social and employment policies in general – closely embedded into a broader governance framework. We will show in our paper that in this context, a formerly simple and mostly irrelevant distributional tool has turned to become a conditional and highly relevant financing instrument of EU social and employment policies: the European Social Fund (ESF). Due to its well-established position in domestic

delivery-landscapes, its role for the implementation of EU active inclusion policies should not be underestimated. However, there is still a lack of research on the role of EU funding tools and how they shape domestic structures. In order to shed light on this question, we will conduct a fuzzy-set analysis of impact, usage, problems and incentives of EU active inclusion policies, transported via the European Social Fund. We do not only aim to identify the empirically existing types of EU-appearance via the ESF against the backdrop of theoretically derived ideal types, but also to detect a number of characteristics behind these types. Our analysis is based on the empirical findings in 18 local cases in six different welfare states: France, Poland, UK, Sweden, Germany and Italy.

EU active inclusion policies and their financial back-up

During the 1970s, anti-poverty policies entered the European arena for the first time and later on also the concept of social exclusion became of certain relevance. However, anti-poverty and social policies were still isolated to some extent from other EU policy domains. It was in 1989 when a "Resolution of the Council of Ministers for Social Affairs on Combating Social Exclusion" was launched and established the first links between social exclusion, economic and employment policies. This trend was strengthened in the following years. In 2008, the Commission launched 'recommendations on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market' (European Commission, 2008). For active inclusion, emphasis is put on three strands: (1) adequate income support, (2) inclusive labour markets and (3) access to quality services. Adequate income support refers to passive benefits, but also to in-work benefits and the help to benefit access. With inclusive labour markets, equal access to employment, quality jobs, a focus on the needs of excluded people for labour market integration, and the prevention of labour market segmentation by promoting job retention and advancement is meant. Access to quality services includes social assistance services, employment and training services, housing support and social housing, childcare, long-term care services and health services (European Commission, 2008). This means that the domestic social security systems, demand- and supply side employment policies, as well as social policies are concerned. Here, the former sectorial boundaries between policy fields ('social', 'employment', 'economic') are to some extent dispelled, and social- and employment policies in a broader sense have been merged into one part of an integrated EU strategy. The overall objective is growth, and social inclusion is explicitly framed towards labour market participation and employment.

The recommendations from 2008 did not result in strong implementation outcomes in most Member States (European Commission, 2013a). However, active inclusion policies are linked to the above outlined cyclical process of the European Semester under the priority of 'inclusive growth', which shall reinforce the implementation in the Member states. Furthermore, the European Social Fund (ESF) is nowadays explicitly targeted towards the Active Inclusion Strategy (European Commission, 2013a, 2013b) and the entire social- and employment dimension in European policies. European structural funding exists since the very beginning of the European Integration process. Nevertheless, research on the impact of structural funds is, beyond implementation studies, still in its infancy. Although especially studies on the role of Europe in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and Southern European countries mention the relevance of the ESF as a funding tool in social and employment policies among others: (Graaf/Sirovátka, 2012; Zirra, 2010), there are only very few studies which address the ESF as a governance tool (van Gerven et al., 2013; Verschraegen et al., 2011). All these studies underline the relevance of administrative capacities in the context of the funding procedure. (Verschraegen et al., 2011)of policy learning which comes through the usage of

the ESF (Verschraegen et al., 2011). Nevertheless, there seems to be no systematic comparative study on the ESF covering several European countries. For the ERDF, there are some cross-country studies, but here as well the role of the fund as a European governance tool is underestimated. Tosun (2014) is nevertheless able to show that the absorption rates of the ERDF are linked to government capacity in the 25 Member States.

While initially the funds (mainly the European Social Fund, ESF, and the European Regional Development Fund, ERDF) were simple compensation payments to achieve greater economic coherence among the regions in Europe, they actually turned out to be key instruments of the EU governance framework. The underlying programmatic principles of the structural funds nowadays follow strictly the priorities of EU policies, and the funds have become attractive financial incentives for member states to implement the European strategy (Tömmel, 2006). In general, the targeting of the European Social Fund towards the EU employment priorities has been strengthened, including a stronger focus on the partnership approach and interlinked policy fields: the overall aim to increase employment rates in member states is followed by a target group approach focusing on the labour market integration of vulnerable groups such as youths, migrants, older workers, low skilled etc. These programmatic priorities are underlined by certain organisational objectives: especially the focus on participation and cooperation in the context of the so-called 'partnership-principle' is strongly favoured. The aim is to include a broad range of stakeholders in the process of policy formulation and implementation (EU COM 2007). In the previous funding period (2007-2013) 60% of the ESF were targeted towards the Lisbon strategy (Council of the European Union, 2006), which means that these sums should directly finance projects in the Member States which were in line with the Lisbon targets. This targeting has been crucially reinforced for the current funding period 2014-2020. Not only a clear link to the national reform programmes of the European Semester and the headline targets of Europe2020 are outlined (The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2013) here, but also a so-called "ex-ante conditionality" has been introduced. Ex-ante conditionality means that Member States need to meet certain requirements in order to be eligible to funding. These requirements relate to the regulatory framework, to policies and/or strategies and to administrative/institutional capacity of the Member States. For active inclusion, an own conditionality exists, which implies clear criteria for fulfilment (European Commission, 2014: 257).

Thus, the ESF has changed its steering potential significantly since the launch of the Lisbon Strategy. While initially it served as a compensation tool towards regional cohesion, without any clear programmatic objective, it has now turned to be a very detailed and targeted governance instrument. This means that the EU entered new territory with its governance toolkit: while the initial period of EU governance focused on regulative instruments ('hard law') as a result of the communitarisation of certain policy fields, a second era of coordination/network governance can be stated, when the above outlined soft tools came up. Now, in a third step, with the structural funding turning from a simple unconditional moneybag into a distributive, conditional funding instrument of detailed policy programmes, the European Union advances its governance toolkit: conditional financial incentives as a market mechanism in addition to hierarchy and soft-tools[2]. Incentive-based instruments are – if we follow the path-breaking approach on policy types introduced by Theodore

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[2] These 'soft tools' have been discussed intensively under the label „new forms of governance", not solely but with a strong emphasis on European governance. Here, coordination, trust, networks and other forms are seen as a third dimension of governance, in addition to market and hierarchy/power.

Lowi (Lowi, 1972) - a guiding principle of distributive policies, motivating the policy recipients on a discretionary basis, but implying the risk of free-rider behaviour (Heinelt, 2007; Lowi, 1972; Mayntz, 1982; Windhoff-Héritier, 1987). However, as outlined above, the ESF is not anymore based on pure incentives but linked to certain requirements. With such 'aid conditionality' (Dobbin et al., 2007; Edquist, 2006; Verschraegen et al., 2011) entering the scene, the motivating character of the financial aid is complemented by certain pressure. Although the usage of the fund is still discretionary for Member States and domestic organisations, it is now imposed as a lever to achieve translation of EU policies into national practices. In addition, by linking Country Specific Recommendations and National Reform Programmes as crucial procedural parts of the European Semester to the administrative processes of the European Social Fund, another tool for coordinating EU policy implementation has been introduced, which is mainly based on learning, but also on leverage. Ingeborg Tömmel already depicted this mechanism for earlier linkages between the ESF and soft governance tools (Tömmel, 2006).

The implementation of EU active inclusion policies (and other policies in the broad field of social and employment) is thus now based on three integrated governance tools, which combine procedural elements, financial incentives and aid conditionality. The aim is to overcome the risks of free-rider effects in structural funding (taking money without applying European policies) and non-compliance in the context of the soft tools, by effectively linking the advantages of the different governance elements. Table 1 summarizes the steering mechanisms of integrated governance tools, meeting each other in the framework of the European Social Fund.

Table 1: Integrated governance tools in EU social and employment policies

Governance Tool	Steering Mechanism	Transforming Mechanism	Examples
Procedural	Coordination	Learning, Leverage	National Reform Programmes, ESF Programming, Country Specific Recommendations etc.
Distributive	Incentive	Motivation	ESF-money
Conditionality	Imposition	Leverage	ESF ex-ante conditionality, earmarking, targeting etc.

Source: own depiction

To sum up, we can therefore state that EU active inclusion policies are today a well-integrated part of a broader framework. From a policy perspective, the concept of active inclusion is based on a link between social protection, active labour market policies and social services, with all three pillars strengthening labour market participation. The sectorial frontier between social and employment policies, which is still a dominant one in most Member States, is to a large extent dispelled – with a strong trend towards employment. From a governance perspective, we can observe that the above mentioned soft tools have been subsumed under the umbrella of the European Semester, and are therefore part of the overall governance architecture of the European Union; strongly backed up by the ESF as a conditional distributive tool. Against the backdrop of the high relevance of the ESF in Member States' delivery landscape, it can be argued that this link between the soft tools and the Fund might lead to strong reinforcement of EU governance in the field of active inclusion (and beyond). But is there any impact of European policies via the European Social Fund? Or to put it another way: can we observe Europeanisation of active inclusion policies by EU structural funding? This question needs to be tackled by studying lower politico-administrative levels, since the administration of the ESF is usually organised at different subnational levels in the Member States.

Furthermore, it is the local level where the delivery of active inclusion policies takes place, and the delivery level is exactly the main focus of the ESF. Therefore, in order to address the issue of impact of EU active inclusion via the ESF, we will in the next subchapter develop a research perspective which enables us to analyse the role the European Social Fund plays in local social and employment policies.

Usage and impact of EU active inclusion policies via the ESF

As outlined above, EU active inclusion policies are nowadays embedded in a broad framework – both in terms of governance and policy programmes. We cannot identify one specific tool, recommendation or directive representing EU active inclusion policies, but rather a certain policy paradigm which manifests itself in a complex bundle of programmes, principles, norms, approaches and governance tools in the field of social and employment policies, and which is as such transported by the European Social Fund. If we are now interested in what of this 'bundle' the ESF takes to the domestic subnational level, we need to apply a research perspective which takes into account the somewhat diffuse character of the active inclusion bundle, as well as the different domestic setups which it might encounter. A very well-received approach to study what Europe causes in Member States from a bottom-up perspective is the concept of 'usages of Europe' by Woll and Jaquot (Graziano et al., 2011; Jacquot/Woll, 2003; Woll/Jaquot, 2010) . The authors identify strategic usages of opportunities and constraints as a cause of domestic change. Usages are then categorized according to their functionality, and the authors identify three types: cognitive usage, strategic usage and legitimating usage:

> *Cognitive usage* refers to the understanding and interpretation of a political subject and is most common in when issues are being defined or need to be discussed, so that ideas serve as persuasion mechanism. *Strategic usages* refer to the pursuit of clearly defined goals by trying to influence policy decision or one's room for manoeuvre, helping to aggregate interests and to build coalition of heterogeneous actors – be it by increasing one's access to the policy process or the number of political tools available. It is the most common of all types and occurs typically in the middle of the political process, once all stakes are clearly defined. *Legitimating usage* occur when political decisions need to be communicated and justified. Actors rely on the image of 'Europe' to communicate implicit content or employ related discursive figures such as 'the European interest', 'European constraints', 'the application of the Maastricht criteria' to legitimate political choices. (Woll/Jaquot 2010: 7)

As the authors state, different types of actors make use of different elements, such as ideas, institutions, legal and budgetary resources or discursive references.

The usages-approach has definitely brought forward Europeanisation research. However, the strong focus on the usages has led to certain underestimation of the original focus of the research strand: the impact of European Integration on the domestic level. Despite usages being possibly the cause of change, they do not necessarily lead to change. We could imagine a number of plausible examples where usages of Europe do not change anything in the domestic arena in a substantial way: a politician who refers literally to EU law but his action is in no way related to it is only one example. In other words: analysing the usages of Europe does not mean analysing Europeanisation, if we understand Europeanisation as EU-induced change. Such an open approach can be taken as an advantage, since *it does not assume* a priori *that Europe has had an effect (Graziano et al., 2011: 5)*, but it also holds the risk of analytical fuzziness, if the difference between usages and effects is not made clear in the research agenda. Analysing Europeanisation as EU-induced change thus needs to understand usages of EU resources as transmitter for change, but not as indicators for change itself.

We therefore need to apply a concept which combines both the notion of 'usages of Europe' and the impact of such usages in terms of change. We will call this combined perspective *EU-appearance*, since the term appearance captures not only a passive presence, but also more active attendance, occurrence or participation. EU-appearance is thus defined as a visibility of a specific EU policy or governance paradigm in a domestic policy arena. This concept is sensitive to EU-impact in the entire policy arena (rather than limited to its output), but also captures usages which might not tackle the arena at all. Combining usages and impact, EU-appearance cannot simply be measured in higher or lower levels, but might naturally result in different forms. A policy arena can be characterised by high usages of European resources and show either strong or weak impact of the EU paradigm. The same could be the case for low usages: here, theoretically, both strong and weak impact could be identified.

If we apply the notion of EU-appearance to the role of EU active inclusion policies, transported via the ESF towards local social and employment policies, we can easily see the benefit of such a combined and policy-arena sensitive approach. Since we could identify that learning and motivation (and not hard-law directives) are crucial mechanisms in this integrated framework, we can assume that the entire local policy arenas need to be taken into account when analysing the role of the ESF in local social and employment policies. Furthermore, by analysing both usages and impact, we can cope with the ESF as an incentive AND as a coordination- and imposing tool. Since we are interested in what the ESF transports, we can start by analysing its usages and then turn to look at the impact, which might go beyond the funding scheme. Different elements of what we have called integrated governance tools (Table 1) might either result only in usages or in impact, or show both or none. In theory, four different types of appearance of EU active inclusion policies transported via the ESF might show up in local social and employment policies. By referring to the response of local policy arenas to the EU steering attempt in active inclusion policies, we labelled these types 'careerists', 'free riders', 'refuseniks' and 'hot deals' (Table 2). In 'careerist' local policy arenas, the actors use the ESF, and we can observe impact on belief systems, ideas and/or procedures. Here, appearance is high both in terms of usages and impact. If usages are high and impact is low, we have a 'free rider' local policy arena: the money is taken, but without results in terms of impact. A 'refusenik' local policy arena does not use the ESF, and we cannot observe any impact either. Finally, a 'hot deal' local policy arena we would find if high impact was detectable without high usage.

Table 2: Ideal types of EU-appearance
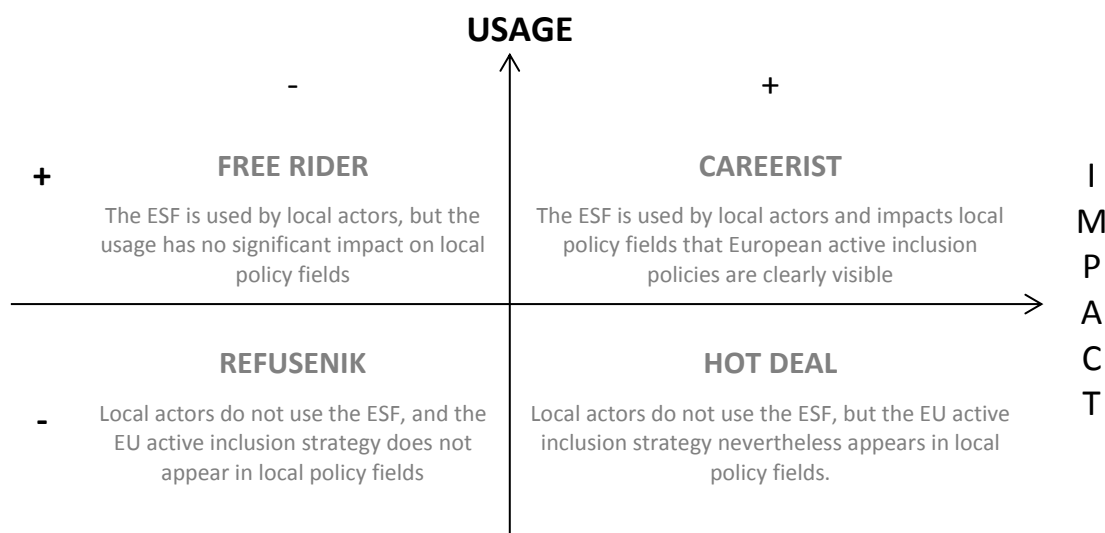
Source: own depiction

These four different types represent ideal types (Weber, 1904) of EU-appearance through the European Social Fund. To what extent can we find these types in the empirical reality? This is the first main question to be answered in this paper. We will limit our usages-analysis to strategic usages of the ESF (i.e. applying for funding; receiving funding) and do not address cognitive or legitimating usage. With regard to the impact-analysis, we will focus on three theoretically and empirically derived variables in order to depict the different empirical patterns of ESF-driven EU-appearance in local social and employment policies.

Furthermore, as outlined above, some preliminary or regionally limited findings exist on the role of the ESF or European Funding in general: firstly, the literature indicates that the relevance of the ESF as a financing tool for social and employment policies is higher in more disadvantaged regions, since problem pressure is high and a lot of European money is available - in other words: the financial incentive is higher

(van Gerven et al., 2013). Furthermore, we can derive from the literature that administrative capacities seem to be relevant in order to deal with the bureaucratic procedures linked to European funding (Tosun, 2014, 2014). However, these findings are still limited in their spatial scope or not ESF (but ERDF)-targeted, as mentioned above. Thus, to what extent do these incentives and capacities matter for the empirical reality of EU-appearance in our 18 cases? Can we observe certain patterns within the empirical existing types? This is the second question to be addressed in this paper.

Both questions shall be answered for 18 local cases in six different European Member States, covering all types of welfare states, by applying a fuzzy-set analysis on the basis of in-depth qualitative case studies. In the next section, we will introduce these variables and outline the design of the study in a more detailed manner.

Research Design

In order to empirically depict and further analyse the existing types of EU-appearance at the local level in the framework of European Active Inclusion policies, transported by the European Social Fund, we will build on in-depth case studies accomplished in 18 local entities in six different European countries (three per country). A set-theoretic fuzzy-set approach allows us to structure our huge amount of data from the 18 case studies and six country reports in a standardised way, while we are nevertheless able to analyse it qualitatively. In the following subsections, we will briefly outline our case selection and the applied methods, as well as introduce the fuzzy-set approach.

Case selection and methods

At the country-level, a most different case selection strategy has been applied, since all different types of European welfare states are covered, and the countries show different patterns of politic-administrative decentralisation: France, Italy, UK, Sweden, Poland and Germany. The selection of the local entities also followed a most different case-selection strategy. For each country, one local entity with a socio-economic performance[3] above the national average, one below and one which shows similar socio-economic performance than the national average has been chosen. Furthermore, the cases show variation in terms of the dominant political tradition, their size and their administrative

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[3] Local performance has been assessed by looking at the regional GDP, labour force participation rate and unemployment rate in comparison to the national average

responsibilities in the multilevel system of the country. Among the 18 cases are thus cities with about 50.000 inhabitants, but also with about 2.7 million inhabitants, as well as those which show for example a strong social-democratic or a dominant conservative tradition. Furthermore, some cities have only administrative responsibilities for a small municipal territory, while others are capitals of a region or even the country. Although these broad differences among the cases for sure hold a number of methodological risks, the advantages of such a most-different design outweigh the disadvantages from our perspective.

The in-depth case studies which are the basis for this analysis are grounded on expert-interviews and document analyses. A total of 264 interviews were conducted in the 18 local entities in the context of a broader research project. Up to five interviews in each case were solely focused on Europeanisation, while the other interviews were conducted in the broader framework of research on local social and employment policies and contained a section on Europe. The interviews and documents were analysed according to a joint research framework and the data was summarized in 18 extensive case studies on local social and employment policies and six country reports on local Europeanisation. The case studies and country reports have then been analysed by applying a fuzzy-set approach (see below), and the results have been cross-checked with the researchers who conducted the interviews in the single cases. Due to reasons of anonymity, the clear names of the cities are not mentioned, but the cases are abbreviated with codes. The code entails the country-abbreviation and a number between 1 and 3, with 1 standing for the case with a socio-economic performance above the national average, 2 for average performance and 3 for the underperforming case (e.g. the average case in France is named F2, and the underperforming case on Poland PL3). The case studies have been accomplished in the years 2012 and 2013. Although we do not limit the scope of our analysis to a specific timeframe, the focus is thus on the ESF programming period 2007-2013, since both document and interview data mainly refer to this period.

Fuzzy-set ideal type analysis

The aim of this study is to identify local types of EU-appearance via the ESF. Above, we have introduced four different types of EU-appearance (Table 2), taking into account the two relevant dimensions of Europeanisation: usages and impact of Europe. However, the four types are only theoretically existing ideal types (Weber, 1904), and as Weber states: *The relationship between the logical structure of the conceptual system in which we present such "ideas" and what is immediately given in empirical reality naturally varies considerably.* (Weber, 1904: 54).

Here, set-theoretical thinking helps to address the problem of measuring empirically existing types (Kvist, 2007). If we construct both usages and impact as sets, our ideal types are based on full membership or full non-membership to these sets to which we can assign numerical scores: a free rider would show full membership (1) in the set of usage and full non-membership (0) in the set of impact, and so on (see Table 3).

Table 3: Set-Membership of ideal types

	Membership in the set of usage	Membership in the set of impact
Careerist	1	1
Free Rider	1	0
Refusnik	0	0
Hot Deal	0	1

Source: own depiction

However, if we construct set-membership not as pure dichotomy but allow for different "degrees of membership", we can measure the empirical reality with regard to the theoretically existing ideal types. An empirical case could then for example be only to a certain extent in the set of usage, or show a bit but not full impact (be only partly a member of this set). Such a fuzzy-set ideal type analysis is suggested by Kvist (2007), who stresses the advantages of such an approach for a *precise operationalization of theoretical concepts, the configuration of concepts into ideal types, and the categorization of cases.* (Kvist, 2007:1). For sure, such a concept depends on the carefully and reliable operationalization of concepts and calibration of set-memberships. A detailed description of the concepts and the set-calibrations is provided in d in the annex, but the basic definitions will be outlined here.

First of all, we need to clearly define how we conceptualize both 'usage' and 'impact'. As outlined above, we limit our analysis to strategic usage of the ESF, which we define as the active pursuit of local stakeholders in the field to receive ESF-funding (and thus imply also non-successful application in addition to successful applications and the reception of funds). The population of all usage-cases thus consists of all cases where this phenomenon can be observed. With regard to impact, we apply a threefold concept. As a first dimension of impact, we take the notion of building up ESF-support structures (short: SUPPORT, cf. d). The second dimension of impact covers project learning, (LEARNING, cf. table) in the sense of budget planning, staff hiring, or monitoring/evaluation etc. As a third dimension of impact we add partnership cooperation (short: PARTNERSHIP, cf. d). As outlined above, the partnership principle is a crucial element of the EU policy paradigm, strongly reinforced by the ESF. Increased cooperation among partners caused by the ESF is thus a strong (top-down) indicator of impact. The population of impact-cases therefore consists of all cases where we observe ESF-induced change in the administrative structures, the interaction between stakeholders and/or the LEARNING in the field of local social and employment policies.

On the basis of our case-knowledge and the fuzzy-set analysis, we could apply a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to identify necessary and/or sufficient conditions - respectively combinations of conditions - for the different empirical types as outcomes, and thus depict causal patterns behind the different types. However, for running a sound QCA-analysis and identify causal patterns on the basis of Boolean algebra, our sample is too small. 18 cases could hypothetically be distributed among the four types in a way that we have four or five cases in each type – a number which would create very high numbers of logical remainders in a QCA and thus do not produce sound results (Schneider/Wagemann, 2012: 117). Nevertheless, our data is rich enough to provide us with descriptive information on incentives and problems regarding EU-appearance. We thus include such (potential) incentives and problems in our fuzzy-set analysis in order to enrich our knowledge on the patterns of EU-appearance. However, the interpretation of the data on incentives and knowledge follows a strictly *descriptive* approach but does not make *causal* statements, unless there are strong qualitative indicators towards causality.

Thus, we do not only need to operationalize usage and impact, but also the potential barriers and enablers of the empirical EU-appearance, as outlined above. In the case of the level of incentives as an enabler (short: INCENTIVE), the ESF funding scheme plays a crucial role. The amount of funding which a region receives depends on its economic situation, and so-called convergence-regions

receive the highest funding[4]. Furthermore, in convergence regions, up to 85% of project costs can be funded by the ESF, while it is usually only up to 50% in the other regions. Thus, the financial incentive provided by the ESF is higher in convergence regions than in other regions, and it is the membership in the set of convergence-regions which we use for our analysis. With regard to the barriers (short: PROBLEMS), we operationalize a (subjectively perceived, cf. Table 4) lack of administrative capacities or lack of available co-funding as the main indicator for membership.

Each empirical case can be a member or a non-member of the set of USAGE-cases and IMPACT-cases, as well of the sets of PROBLEMS and INCENTIVE. Furthermore, cases can be partly members or non-members. However, in order to measure empirical existing memberships, we do not only need clear definitions of the populations, but also careful calibrations of set-memberships. First of all, we need to decide what we understand of full membership (1) and full non-membership for each concept. Furthermore, the 'point of indifference' (0.5) is to be defined: when is a case neither in nor out of the set? Although the researcher should avoid to assign cases to a 0.5 fuzzy membership score (Schneider/Wagemann, 2012: 28), the definition is nevertheless crucial since it clarifies the qualitative distinction between membership and non-membership – in our cases between usage and non-usage and impact and non-impact. After having decided on these three qualitative anchors (1, 0 and 0.5), we are able to calibrate the fuzzy-sets. In theory, fuzzy membership-scores can have any value between 0 and 1, depending on the degree to which the case is on or out the specific set (Ragin, 2000: 156). On the basis of the existing data in the 18 case studies, a detailed differentiation between set-memberships was not possible without losing reliability. We thus decided to calibrate set memberships on a four-scale-basis: a case can be fully in the set (1), partly in (0,66), partly out (0,33) or fully out (0). The only exception is the concept of INCENTIVES, which represents itself as dichotomic by nature: a case is either member of the set of convergence-regions or not. We have therefore only a crisp-set of membership (1) or non-membership (0) in this case. Detailed qualitative descriptions and definitions for all concepts can be found in Table 4 in the annex.

In the next section, we will depict the results of our fuzzy-set analysis in order to show the empirical reality of EU-appearance, and to analyze the empirical types according to both the different dimensions of EU-appearance and the potential barriers and enablers.

Local types of EU-appearance

On the basis of in-depth case studies, we have conducted a fuzzy-set analysis for 18 local cases in six European countries. The analysis covers on the one hand the two-folded concept of EU-appearance, based on the notions of usage and impact (with impact being based on three dimensions: SUPPORT, PARTNERSHIP and LEARNING). On the other hand, we included in our analysis potential problems and incentives of EU-appearance. The case-study data for all cases has been scored according to qualitative set-membership definitions, and the results are listed in Table 5 in the annex. In this section, we will in a first step present our empirical results with regard to the ideal types outlined above, and to the different patterns of EU-appearance. In a second step, we will discuss these results against the backdrop of our theoretical model and the research questions

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[4] Convergence regions are regions with a GDP of less than 75% of the EU25 average. Phasing-out regions show a GDP of more than 75% of the EU25 average but less than 75% of the EU15 average. Phasing-in regions have a GDP of less than 75% of the EU15 average in the funding period 2000-2006 but higher than 75% of the EU15 average in the funding period 2007-2013. All other regions are so-called competitive-and-employment regions.

Empirical results

In theory, we can identify four different types of EU-appearance via the ESF: 'careerists', 'free riders', 'refuseniks' and 'hot deals' (Table 2). On the basis of our fuzzy-set analysis, we are now able to depict the empirical reality among our 18 cases. Each case is considered as a configuration of two aspects (usage and impact) of the phenomenon of interest. Since each of the four ideal types represents a specific combination of these two aspects (cf. Table 3), we can now assign our empirical cases to these specific combinations. Furthermore, since we apply a fuzzy-set approach, we are able to tell *to what degree* our cases correspond to these combinations, and therefore depict the empirical reality of the theoretically derived ideal types. A scatter plot Figure 1) which has been laid on the ideal-types helps to visualize these results:

Figure 1: Empirical types of EU-appearance via the ESF
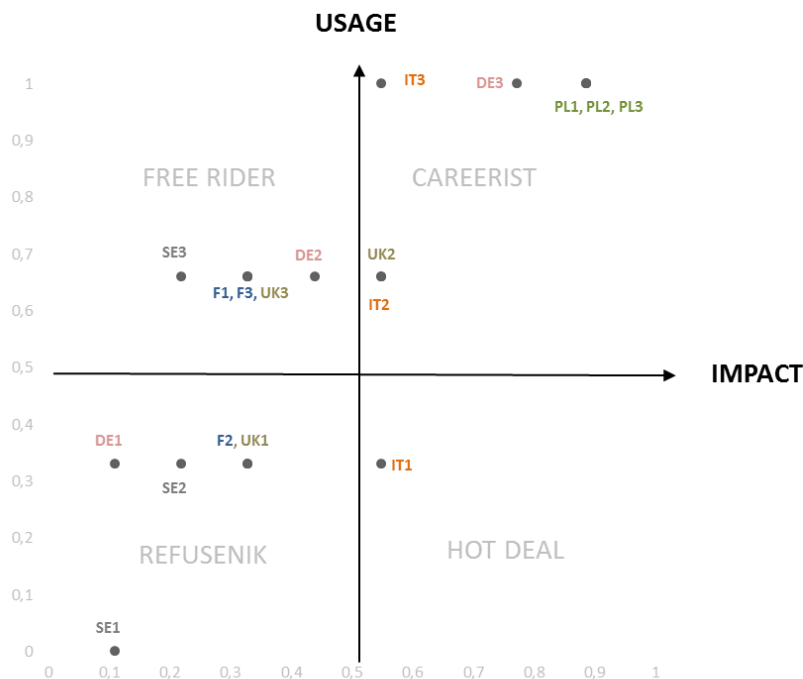
Source: own depiction

According to our analysis, each theoretically existing type is represented in reality. Among three of these types, we find a quite balanced distribution of the cases. We can observe seven 'careerists' (IT3, DE3, PL1, PL2, PL3, UK2 and IT2), five 'free riders' (SE3, F1, F3, UK3 and D2), five 'refuseniks' (DE1, SE2, F2, UK1, and SE1) but only one 'hot deal' (IT1). Furthermore, the cases show different degrees of membership to the four types. On the one hand, four cases show very high membership-scores of a specific type, while the others are more somewhere in the mid-table of the types. It is the Swedish over-performing case (SE1) which comes very close to the ideal type of a refusenik (impact: 0,11, usage: 0); and we can identify four 'clear careerists': the German underperforming case (DE3, with impact: 0,77and usage 1) and the three Polish cases (PL1, PL2, PL3 with impact 0,89 and usage 1).On the other hand, we have five cases (DE2, UK2, IT2, IT3 and IT1) which show impact-scores[5] very close to the point of indifference (0,5), which hampers interpretation of type-patterns due to a certain risk of unclear type-assignment. This is especially a problem with regard to the Italian over-

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[5] These scores are possible since impact is conceptualized as the mathematical mean of three dimensions.

performing case, since it is the only representative of the 'hot-deal' type. In order to avoid weak statements and unreliable conclusions, we will thus only analyze the cases representing the three other types. For the other three cases, we are able to identify clear empirical patterns on the basis of our fuzzy –set analysis, which covers the different dimensions of EU-appearance but also potential problems and incentives. Here, a clear relevance of the ESF-funding scheme (*convergence-regions* with high funding and low co-funding requirements vs. *employment-and-competitiveness-regions* with lower funding and higher co-funding requirements for the ESF-beneficiaries[6], see above) can be observed, but also other patterns which are related to EU-appearance via the ESF:

1. The ideal type of *careerists* would be characterized by high usage and high impact. The seven empirical careerists are, with two exceptions, cohesion-regions with higher rates of available ESF-funding and lower co-funding to be provided by the ESF-beneficiaries. The two exceptions are the Italian and the UK average-performing cases, which show both lower usages than the other careerists. Here, the UK average type is to some extent a special case with regard to the funding scheme: although the city itself is not part of a cohesion-region, it holds administrative responsibilities for a broader cohesion-region. All cases which are cohesion regions among our 18 cases are a careerist. With regard to the ESF-problems, we cannot identify a clear pattern for the careerists, since we have cases where a lack of co-funding and/or a lack of administrative capacities can be observed, and cases where this is not a problem. However, the only two cases in the entire sample where these issues are not judged as a problem (DE3 and UK2) can be found in this type. When it comes to the different dimensions of impact, the picture is clearer: both with regard to support structures and learning, we can find among the careerists only cases where full-membership in these sets (SUPPORT and LEARNING) is given. Although not all cases show high scores here, this is still a clear distinction to the other types.
Among the careerists are all three Polish cities. These are the only cases where a clear country-pattern is given: all cases show the same results in all analytical dimensions. Furthermore, these three cases are those with the highest EU-appearance in total. This corresponds clearly with the role of the European Union in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries as mentioned in the literature (see Graaf/Sirovátka, 2012 for the Czech Republic).

2. Ideal *free riders* would show high usage but low impact. The empirical reality depicts that most but not all relevant actors in the free rider cases use the ESF (usage is always scored with 0,66). No convergence-region is among the free riders, and a lack of co-funding and/or administrative capacities is a problem for a crucial number of actors in all cases. As for the different dimensions of impact, we can observe that the differences between these dimensions are higher than in other types: while the free riders have mostly (except the Swedish underperforming case) build up support structures, the impact on partnership and learning is low.

3. According to our theoretical approach, ideal *refuseniks* would be characterized by low usage and low impact. One empirical case, the Swedish over-performing case, comes very close to this ideal type. But also the other refuseniks share certain characteristics with regard to their EU-appearance. Their impact-scores are in general remarkably low, especially for partnership cooperation. In all except one case (the UK over-performing case) no ESF-induced partnership cooperation could at all be identified. Furthermore, both the Swedish and the

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[6] ESF beneficiay are organisations receiving ESF-funding

German over-performing case are among the refuseniks: these are the only two cases in the entire sample where no learning at all could be identified and where a lack of co-funding and/or a lack of administrative capacities is a problem for all relevant actors. Another remarkable fact is that no underperforming case is among the refuseniks.

Discussion

On the basis of the above outlined empirical results, we can state that we could observe three of the four ideal types in the empirical reality. Especially two of these three empirically existing types of EU-appearance show very clear patterns of impact, usage, incentives and problems: *careerists* and *refuseniks*. However, what do these results tell us with regard to our research questions?

As for the first research question (to what extent the ideal types exist in the empirical reality), the answer has been already answered above: three of the theoretically existing types could be found in reality, with a relative balanced distribution of the cases among the types (seven careerists, five free riders and five refuseniks). For two of the types (refuseniks and careerists), empirical cases exist which come close to the ideal type in terms of set membership. Furthermore, we find a high number of cases in the mid-table of the cases, showing membership to the different types to a certain degree. The fourth type (hot deal) is only represented by one empirical case, which is furthermore very close to the crossover-point between hot deals and refuseniks. This is why we decided not to interpret this case. The fact that the three other types are more or less equally represented in reality, while the fourth type is underrepresented can be taken as a criterion for the quality of the theoretical model: it shows that – as assumed – the two dimensions of EU-appearance (usage and impact) cannot be analysed one without the other and have a specific relationship with each other. As outlined above, usage might be a transmitter for impact (in the case of careerists), but might also exist without impact (in the case of free riders). The empirical underrepresentation of the hypothetical type of impact without usage (hot deal) thus underlines the role of usage as transmitter of impact.

Turning to the second research question (whether we can observe certain patterns within the empirical existing types), we can state that there are especially explicit patterns observable for refuseniks and careerists. Careerists are mainly characterized by high impact with regard to ESF support structures and learning. Furthermore, all except one careerist are ESF convergence-regions, which means that high funding rates are available and ESF-beneficiaries need to invest lower co-funding. Although a lack to bring up such co-funding and/or a lack of administrative capacities also exist in careerists-cases, it still seems to be of less relevance than for refuseniks. Furthermore, we could not identify any convergence case and any underperforming case among the refuseniks, and the impact of the ESF – although low in general in this type – is remarkably low for partnership cooperation.

The results strongly indicate that the ESF-funding scheme plays a crucial role for careerists. As already mentioned, all except one careerist are ESF convergence-regions. Furthermore, we could not find any convergence region on our sample which is not a careerist. In other words, we might be able to assume that being member of the set of cohesion-regions is thus a sufficient condition of being a careerist. The financial incentive for stakeholders in the convergence-region to use the ESF is much higher than in other regions, not only because of the higher funding availability but also because of the socio-economic situation in these regions (convergence-regions have a GDP of less than 75% of the EU25 average). The high usage in these regions can thus be explained by a strong financial incentive of the ESF. Such a crucial role of incentive structures is also indicated by the absence of

underperforming cases in the refusenik-type: richer municipalities (over-performing and average performing) might count the costs (in terms of co-funding and bureaucracy) of using the ESF against the benefit, while poorer cities rely on the European money and cannot afford to refuse. This assumption is also supported by the findings on the role of problems with the ESF, which are more dominant in the case of refuseniks. With regard to the high impact in careerist-cases, the fact that support structures (e.g. special administrative division in organizations, or external consulting agencies) and learning in the sense of budget planning, staff hiring, or monitoring/evaluation etc. are of higher relevance for impact than partnership cooperation, indicates that the administrative procedures related to the usage might impact the local level more than the programmatic dimensions of the ESF. Here, the ESF shows its role as procedural governance tool (cf. Table 1which tries to shape the domestic level by coordination.

Active Inclusion funded by Europe? Concluding remarks

While they had started as a more or less stand-alone policy programme, EU active inclusion policies are nowadays closely embedded in a broad framework – both in terms of governance and policy programmes. We cannot identify one specific tool, recommendation or directive representing EU active inclusion policies, but rather a certain policy paradigm which manifests itself in a complex bundle of programmes, principles, norms, approaches and governance tools in the field of social and employment policies, and which is as such transported by the European Social Fund, as outlined above.The ESF is very well established in most – if not all - Member States as a funding tool (Crowhurst/Kendall, 2011). ESF funded projects are a crucial part of the domestic delivery landscapes. Nevertheless, there is little knowledge on how the ESF shapes local social and employment policies. In order to shed light on this question, we conducted a fuzzy-set analysis of impact, usage, problems and incentives of EU active inclusion policies, transported via the European Social Fund. We were not only able to identify the empirically existing types of EU-appearance via the ESF but could also detect a number of characteristics behind these types.

Our results show that there are three main empirical types of how the ESF appears in local social and employment arenas, with each type representing a different configuration of usages of the ESF *by* the local level and impact *on* the local level. Since in the first type the EU policy paradigm is the most visible in terms of administrative structures, partnership cooperation and learning, assumedly transmitted by high usages of the ESF, this type is called 'careerist': such local entities might be ready for a career as Europe's best pupil in class. In this type, almost without exception convergence-regions can be found, a fact which indicates a strong relevance of the ESF funding-schemes in terms of incentive-structures. The second type has been labelled 'free-rider-type' because higher usage with low or no impact suggests that the local arenas just 'take the money' but these usages do not have a (remarkable) impact on the local policy arena. The third type we called 'refusenik-type', since here the local arena (mostly) refuses to usage and shows no or low impact. Especially cities with a better socio-economic performance are represented in this type, and there is some evidence that these cases refuse to the usage of the ESF due to lower financial incentives. By differentiating between two different aspects of Europeanisation –usages and impact – we aimed at unravelling the analytical fuzziness which is still observable in the literature. We thus introduced the concept of EU-appearance, which aims at capturing both the notion of usages and of impact, but allows for independent analysis of each of these two dimensions.

By analyzing 18 cases in six different European countries, we were able to show that country patterns are of low relevance when it comes to the way how the European Social Fund transports EU active inclusion policies towards local social and employment policies. Only for one country (Poland) we founds the same results in all local cases – and Poland is the only country in our sample where all local entities are subject to the same funding scheme (almost the entire country is a convergence region). We are thus able to generalize our finding to some extent, despite having analyzed only three cases per country: due to the strong relevance of the incentive structure rather than country-patterns, we are able to state that for Europeanisation by ESF-funding it is the incentive structure which shapes the usages and – with usages being the transmitter – leads to EU-impact on local social and employment policies. Our findings furthermore indicate that EU-impact via the ESF is stronger with regard to the administrative-procedural dimension than with regard to the programmatic output. Especially in cities belonging to the 'careerist-type' (high usage and high impact), ESF-supporting structures (e.g. special administrative division in organizations, or external consulting agencies) have been built up, and here we could also observe a stronger 'project-learning' in the sense of budget planning, staff hiring, or monitoring/evaluation etc. For local policy arenas are therefore different steering mechanisms (cf. Table 1) of the ESF of relevance. While incentives are the most visible element, as outlined above, we could also observe coordination. Coordination takes place in the context of the administrative procedures of the ESF, and appears in our study especially in the context of project learning. Imposition, the third steering mechanisms beyond incentives and coordination) we could not identify in our study. However, our database shows certain limitations and these findings would need further research in order to go beyond some explorative statements. This is especially relevant with regard to the concept of active inclusion: while we started at the European level by conceptualizing EU active inclusion policies and how they are transported via the European Social Fund, we are not able to provide evidence on active inclusion at the local level, but only clear results for the broader policy arena of local social and employment policies. Here again, a more in-depth study of the programmatic details of EU-projects and their role in the local policy arena would be necessary in order to detect concrete active inclusion aspects.

Nevertheless, this study is able to contribute to both the social policy and the Europeanisation debate by providing comparative insights on the role of the European Social Fund in local social and employment policies in 18 cities across six European countries. It calls fora new focus on European structural funding as a relevant integrated governance tool in EU social and employment policies, as well as for a stronger emphasize on the local- respectively the delivery level in welfare state studies.

Appendix

1. Table 4: Concepts and defintions
2. Table 5: Fuzzy-set results, sorted by types

Appendix

Table 4: Concepts and defintions		SUPPORT	LEARNING	PARTNERSHIP	USAGE	INCENTIVE	PROBLEM
CON-CEPT		Membership or non-membership in the set of cases where external or internal support structures have been built up to deal with the administrative procedures for application and administration of the funds?	Membership or non-membership in the set of cases where the usage the usage of ESF funds has led to procedural learning within organizations	Membership or non-membership in the set of cases where the ESF has led to increased cooperation among different partners which have not been involved in close cooperation before	Membership or non-membership in the set of cases where all relevant actors (in delivery) in the city use the ESF as a funding tool	Membership or non-membership in the set of convergence-regions	Membership or non-membership in the set of cases where a lack of co-funding and/or a lack of administrative capacities (money, staff, knowledge) is a problem in the usage of the ESF (degree of incentive)
DEFI-NTIONS AND EXPLA-NATIONS		By support structures especially staff is meant who is in charge of funds' administration and has broad knowledge. This can exist as a special unit within an organization or externally e.g. as an EU-office accessible for all interested organizations.	This refers to processes such as the adaptation of 'project-thinking' (budget planning, staff hiring, definition of objectives etc.) or monitoring/ evaluation.	This refers to the implementation of the EU partnership approach. By partnership cooperation we mean cooperation in ESF-funded projects among partners which have not regularly cooperated outside ESF structures before	This is related to the different delivery structures. If e.g. private for-profit providers are in a country scheme relevant for service delivery, they count to the set of relevant actors in this question, but if the delivery landscape is solely dominated by the public sector or by NGOs, they do not.	This refers to the ESF-funding scheme. In convergence-regions (regions with a GDP less than 75% of the EU-25 average) the ESF covers up t0 85% of the project costs, and more funding is available than in other regions.	This refers to the subjective perception of relevant actors whether a lack of co-funding or of administrative capacities is a problem in applying for funding or using the funds. It includes also statements from actors that it does not make sense for them to apply for funding because it is so time-consuming.
SET-MEMBER SHIP	Fully in (1)	Both internal and external support structures have been built up, have broad knowledge and are accessible for all relevant actors	A learning took place in all relevant organizations	A significant and sustainable increase of cooperation among different stakeholders can be observed	All relevant actors use the ESF	Convergence-Region	It is for all actors a crucial barrier (with minor exceptions)
	Partly in (0,66)	Internal and/or internal support structures exist for most actors, but not all of them (access problems or little knowledge)	Learning could broadly be observed in several organisation	Significant cooperation between different stakeholders can be observed but is either not very sustainable or limited to a few cases	The relevant actors use the ESF with some exceptions		It is for a crucial number of actors a relevant barrier
	Point of indifference (0,5)						
	Partly out (0,33)	Some actors have internal support structures or external capacities exist which are not broadly accessible (or well known)	Learning could only be observed in some minor cases, or was limited to minor procedural issues	Occasionally or just for a few actors	Only a few relevant actors use the ESF (or they do it only occasionally)		Not in general, but few actors mention it as crucial barrier
	Fully out (0)	No capacities	No learning could be observed	Cooperation created by the ESF cannot be observed	The relevant actors do not use the ESF at all	Other regions (Phasing-out, phasing-in, competitiveness and employment	Actors do not perceive it as a barrier (with minor exceptions)

Source: own depiction

Table 5: Fuzzy-set results, sorted by types

| | | EU-APPEARANCE | | | | | BARRIERS AND ENABLERS | |
| | | IMPACT[7] | | | | USAGE | INCENTIVE | PROBLEMS |
		SUPPORT	*PARTNER SHIP*	*LEARNING*				
C A R E E R I S T	**PL1**	*1*	*0,66*	*1*	0,89	1	1	0,66
	PL2	*1*	*0,66*	*1*	0,89	1	1	0,66
	PL3	*1*	*0,66*	*1*	0,89	1	1	0,66
	DE3	*1*	*0,66*	*0,66*	0,77	1	1	0,33
	IT3	*0,33*	*0,66*	*0,66*	0,55	1	1	0,66
	UK2	*0,66*	*0,66*	*0,33*	0,55	0,66	(1)[8]	0,33
F R E E - R I D E R	**IT2**	*0,33*	*0,66*	*0,66*	0,55	0,66	0	0,66
	DE2	*0,66*	*0,33*	*0,33*	0,44	0,66	0	0,66
	UK3	*0,66*	*0,33*	*0,33*	0,33	0,66	0	0,66
	F3	*0,66*	*0*	*0,33*	0,33	0,66	0	0,66
	F1	*0,66*	*0*	*0,33*	0,33	0,66	0	0,66
	SE3	*0,33*	*0*	*0,33*	0,22	0,66	0	0,66
R E F U S E N I K	**UK1**	*0,33*	*0,33*	*0,33*	0,33	0,33	0	0,66
	F2	*0,66*	*0*	*0,33*	0,33	0,33	0	0,66
	SE2	*0,33*	*0*	*0,33*	0,22	0,33	0	0,66
	DE1	*0,33*	*0*	*0*	0,11	0,33	0	1
	SE1	*0,33*	*0*	*0*	0,11	0	0	1
HOT DEAL	**IT1**	*0,33*	*0,66*	*0,66*	0,55	0,33	0	0,66

Source: own depiction

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[7] The score for IMPACT is the arithmetic average of the three dimensions SUPPORT, PARTNERHIP and LEARNING

[8] The UK average case is not a convergence region itself but holds administrative responsibilities for a wider regions, which is a convergence region

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